

MEDIA ADVISORY: National Gender-Based Violence Legal Programs Face Funding Expiry, Advocates Call for Government Action

September 17, 2025 – For Immediate Release

What: Federal funding for gender-based violence legal programs, *trauma-informed legal support for survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence*, that support the [50%](#) of women and gender diverse people in Canada who experience gender-based violence survivors a year is set to end imminently, with no opportunity for renewal.

Who: A national network of 23 community-based organizations and legal experts who Independent Legal Advice (ILA) and Independent Legal Representation (ILR) programs in provinces and territories across Canada.

When: Current project-based funding will expire on March 31, 2026.

OTTAWA, ON, Algonquin Anishinaabeg Territory – Organizations delivering critical legal support to survivors of gender-based violence across Canada are sounding the alarm over the pending expiration of federal funding that sustains these services. Independent Legal Advice (ILA) and Independent Legal Representation (ILR) programs, which support survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence, are currently set to lose funding on March 31, 2026. These programs are essential for supporting the [50%](#) of women and gender diverse people in Canada who experience gender-based violence at some point in their lifetime.

Between April 2023 and March 2024 alone, these programs supported more than 9,000 survivors. Legal support like ILA and ILR services reduces re-traumatization, improves legal understanding, and increases survivors' confidence in navigating criminal, civil, family, and immigration legal systems.

Without sustained funding, survivors will be left vulnerable and unsupported and Canada risks reversing progress on its National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

The network is urging the federal government to:

- **Provide one-year bridge funding** beyond March 31, 2026 to prevent disruptions.
- **Move toward core, long-term funding models** to make ILA and ILR permanent services.
- **Meet with the ILA/ILR national network in Fall 2025** to discuss sustainability, outcomes, and next steps.

These services are not supplementary. They are foundational to a legal system that works for survivors. National commissions and inquiries have repeatedly recommended stable funding for these supports. **Without immediate action, access to justice and safety for survivors are at serious risk.**

Advocacy efforts, including a formal letter to the Ministers of Justice and Women and Gender Equality Canada are underway. You can read the letter [here](#).

Quotes Available Upon Request.

Media Contact(s):

Lily Pourzand, Executive Director, Luke's Place

Lilyp@lukesplace.ca

Emily Murray, Legal Director, Luke's Place

Emilym@lukesplace.ca

About [Luke's Place](#)

Luke's Place is an award-winning non-profit organization solely devoted to improving the safety and experience of women and their children as they proceed through the family law process after fleeing an abusive partner. Luke's Place is named after Luke Schillings, a 3½ year old boy who was murdered by his father on his first unsupervised access visit, after his mother had sought, but was unsuccessful in obtaining, an order for supervised access.

Since 2003, Luke's Place has been delivering family court support services to women who are leaving abusive partners. We provide direct services to hundreds of women in Ontario every year, including providing access to key legal advice and legal services through our Legal Clinic. We also share our expertise with service providers across Ontario and Canada through training, resources, and mentoring, and work with academics to conduct research in our collaborative efforts to improve access to justice for all women and their children. For more information, visit: [Luke's Place](#)